accumulate see the light of day somewhere. Certainly, I would be glad to help with the identification of any apparently anomalous specimens.

Data for the Burren *P. griseoaptera* records are as follows (Irish grid references are followed, in brackets, by 50km, UTM grid references):

Pholidoptera griseoaptera (De Geer), 1773

Clare: 19 August 1998, M3204 (MU3), males and females, limestone pavement with patches of ground vegetation and clumps of low *Corylus*, 200m, coll. and det. M.C.D. Speight, male presented to collections of National Museum of Ireland.

Galway: 22 May 1998, nymphs, 22 July 1998 last instar nymphs, M3405 (NU1), limestone pavement with patches of ground vegetation and clumps of low *Corylus*, 50m., coll. and det. M.C.D. Speight, reared female and nymph presented to collections of National Museum of Ireland.

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Further records of two species of *Oedemera* Olivier (Col.: Oedemeridae) in Kent

The note by Mr A.A. Allen on *Oedemera nobilis* (Scop.) (*Ent. Rec.* **110**: 293) in which he referred to its apparently local distribution within the county was of considerable interest. Being such a "striking and handsome beetle" and one that can instantly be identified in the field my initial recollection was that the species was common and widespread. A perusal of my records, however, revealed only 19 sightings of the beetle between 1979 and 1998 and from 1986 to 1994 there were none whatsoever. The data are: 9.viii.1979 Murston, near Sittingbourne O.S. grid reference TQ 924655 dry fly-ash tip; 12.vi.1983 Murston, near Sittingbourne TQ 921649 derelict industrial grassland and scrub; 7.viii.1983 St. Margaret's at Cliffe, TR 3847 chalk cliff-top grassland; 27.vi.1984 Darland Banks, Gillingham, TQ 793655 open chalk downland; 14.viii.1984 Beltinge Cliff, TR 192685 on flowers of *Daucus carota* L. on coastal clay slopes; 24.viii.1984 Deerton Street, near Teynham, TQ 965628 on flowers of *Daucus carota* L. along roadside verge; 1.viii.1985 Murston, near Sittingbourne TQ 926653; 10.viii.1985 Ham Fen, TR 336550 on flowers of hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* L.; 28.viii.1985 Upper Luton, Gillingham, TQ 7766 open chalk downland; 10.vii.1994 Burham Down, TQ 7462

open chalk downland; 21.viii.1994 Vinters Park LNR, Maidstone, TQ 7756 on flowers of *Daucus carota* L. in dry grassland; 7.vii.1996 Church Marshes, Milton, TQ 9165 dry coastal grassland; 20.vii.1996 Trosley Country Park, TQ 6461 open chalk downland; 15.vi.1997 Ditton Court Quarry, TQ 7157 on flowers of *Daucus carota* L. in open ragstone quarry; 13.vii.1997 Darland Banks, Gillingham, TQ 7965 open chalk downland; 28.vi.1998 Bredhurst, TQ 79956175 open chalk grassland; 11.vii.1998 "Iden Croft Herbs", Staplehurst, TQ 792424 herb garden and nursery; 25.vii.1998 Wrotham Water Downs, TQ 6260 open chalk downland; 26.vii.1998 Darenth Park, TQ 569724 chalk and flint scrub.

These records suggest that the beetle is characteristic of dry, often calcareous, grassland and thus may be overlooked by entomologists, like myself, who prefer to collect in damp woodland. A similar examination of the records for *Oedemera lurida* (Marsham) (below) which Mr Allen also mentioned, shows that whilst the two species may sometimes be found together, and in similar habitats, the latter also occurs in damper situations – 13.vii.1978 Murston, TQ 920646 coastal grassland; 18.vi.1981 Murston ,TQ 914644 dry derelict industrial grassland and scrub; 7.vi.1983 Murston, TQ 9164 dry derelict industrial grassland and scrub; 10.vi.1984 Canterbury Field Study Centre, TR 158593 margins of pond; 30.vi.1984, Shorne Wood, TQ 684702 open clay pits; 8.vi.1985 Canterbury Field Study Centre, TR 158593 open grassland; 20.vii.1985 Lydden Hill, TR257459 roadside chalk cutting; 31.vii.1985 Old Park, Canterbury, TR 168589 open heathland; 13.viii.1985 Davington, TR 003619 dry grassland; 28.viii.1985 Darland Banks, TQ 7865 open chalk downland; 30.viii.1985 Lydden Hill, TR 257459 roadside chalk cutting; 6.vi.1993 Grain, TQ 8877 dry coastal grassland; 18.vii.1993 Chiddingstone Ponds, TQ 5147 damp clay woodland and scrub; 27.v.1995 Lower Beechen Wood, TQ 516639 margins of ride in chalk woodland; 27.v.1995 Lullingstone Park, TQ 5164 open chalk downland beside golf course; 7.vii.1996 Church Marshes, Milton, TQ 9165 rough coastal grassland; 20.vii.1996 Trosley Country Park, TQ 6461 open chalk downland; 31.vii.1996 Leeds TQ 825527 scrubby margins of arable field; 14.v.1997 Denge Wood, TR 106528 open chalk grassland; 19.v.1997 Hargate Forest, TQ 5737 open ride in clay woodland; 26.v.1997 Foal Hurst Wood, TQ 6644 margins of copse; 1.vi.1997 Mereworth Woods, TQ 644556 clearing within mixed deciduous woodland; 15.vi.1997 Ditton Court Quarry, TQ 7157 open ragstone quarry; 29.vi.1997 "Bapchild Fruit Stall", TQ 92656310 margin of arable field; 13.vii.1997 Darland Banks, TQ 7965 open chalk downland; 3.vii.1997 - 7.viii.1997 House Fleet, Grain Oil Refinery, TQ 87957505 in water trap set up in derelict coastal grassland; 14.vi.1998 Snarkhurst Wood, Bearsted, TQ 8255 clearing in damp wood on Gault clay; 20.vi.1998 Brokes Wood, TQ 59254225 scrub bordering damp woodland; 20.vi.1998 Walnut Tree Cottage, Lympne, TR 12253540 identified from a photograph taken by Mrs P. Allen in a cottage garden; 25.vii.1998 Wrotham Water Downs TQ 6260 open chalk downland; 26.vii.1998 Darenth Park, TQ 569724 chalk and flint scrub; 1.viii.1998 Seasalter Village Green TR 079650 on flowers of *Daucus carota* L. on coastal shingle.

Considering that both these species can easily be identified without recourse to capture and detailed examination I would suggest that any apparent rarity is simply due to the failure of interested parties reporting their finds in the literature or to a centralised recording scheme officer whether deliberately, unintentionally or through ignorance.– LAURENCE CLEMONS, 14, St. John's Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4NE.

Collecting notes 1998

Preferring an uncertain future to one certain to be bad, I parted company with my employer of the last twenty-odd years in early 1998. I vowed to rekindle my interest in beetles and to become more specialised in my collecting by focusing my efforts on the Noctuidae and Carabidae. How successful I was in carrying out these resolutions is best judged by the reader!

Collecting began with a holiday at Millook in north Cornwall from 5 to 12 April. My diary records that on 6 April, I was sitting in warm sunshine watching *Gonepteryx rhamni* L., *Inachis io* L. and freshly emerged specimens of *Pararge aegaria* L., *Celastrina argiolus* L. and *Anthocaris cardamines* L. On the following day the daytime temperature plunged to 4°C, rain fell and snow appeared on the hills of distant Dartmoor! In the first part of the week, I recorded 22 species of macromoth including early examples of *Agrotis ipsilon* Hufn. and *Colocasia coryli* L.

A single *Vanessa atalanta* L. appeared in my garden on 2 May and the warm sunshine of 4 May tempted me out to Steart Common on the Somerset coast to hunt Carabids on the flat sea turf and amongst the reeds. Only common species turned up, including *Bembidion minimum* F., *B. iricolor* Bedel and *Demetrias imperialis* Germ., the last being a new species for me. My wife Katherine was at home for the week which we spent hunting Carabids and antiques from the Dorset coast in the east to Porlock, Somerset in the west! The resultant haul (30 species), although mainly commoners, did allow me to practice both setting and the use of those awful keys written in an exotic and ancient language understood only by Coleopterists! The list includes little of note but I did eventually find the mainly northern *Pterostichus aethiops* Panz. on the Quantock Hills.

On 22 May I drove up to Birmingham to join my old friend Richard Clinton and his brother-in-law for our trip to Hungary. We arrived at Balatonfüzfő on the shore of Lake Balaton at 5.30pm the next day after a long, fortunately uneventful, drive. We spent the next two weeks hunting butterflies, beetles and birds in the hills of the Bakony which surround Balatonfüzfő with a couple of trips further afield to the Vertes region and the flat plain or "puszta" near Apaj.

The Bakony held extensive flat areas of limestone grassland and scrub formerly used as military training grounds – presumably by the Red Army. Now abandoned, these areas are home to large populations of butterflies. *Plebejus argus* L. swarmed around muddy puddles whilst *Euphydryas aurinia* Rott., *Melitaea cinxia* L., *M. athalia* Rott. and *Cyaniris semiargus* Rott. flew in large numbers over the short turf. *Maculinea arion* L. was out, but past its best. *Satyrium pruni* L. flew around clumps of Blackthorn bushes. Butterfly species new to me were *Parnassius mnemosyne* L.,

Melitaea trivia D.&S. and *Erbia medusa* D.&S. The latter species was common in the Vertes region where I also found a single *Hypodryas maturna* L. and an Imperial Eagle. This was, so my companions told me, the ornithological highlight of the trip. They were not aware that I had actually scared the bird into flight whilst single-mindedly pursuing a miserable little Lycaenid at full speed over the crest of a low limestone hill! Perhaps it would be better if they never learned the truth!

Moths were few and far between in the reeds surrounding Lake Balaton. This is difficult to explain as the swamps looked very promising. We obtained a series of *Phragmataecia castaneae* Hb. and a female of the Geometer *Ascotis selenaria* D.&S. from which Richard later reared a large brood. I set some 350 beetles from Hungary of which 150 were Carabids. The Bakony woods were rich in Cerambycids and I have to admit that my resolve to specialise soon faltered! Some of the Carabids were easily recognised, such as *Omophron limbatum* Fab., *Agonum sexpunctatum* L. and *Brachinus crepitans* L. but most await identification. Although we did not see as much of Hungary as we had planned, the trip was a memorable success. The people were very friendly and the excellent food and drink was very cheap – perhaps this explains why we did so little moth trapping after dinner!

For most of June the weather was wet and cool. Warm sunshine on 21 June tempted us out to East Quantoxhead, on the Somerset coast, where a single *Colias croceus* Geoff. was noted. We left for Haute Savoie in the northern Alps of France on 3 July. We stayed in a large, traditional, timber-built "chalet" style farmhouse in the small village of Entremont. I ran the trap each night and took a number of interesting Noctuids including *Euchalcia variabilis* Pill., *Pachetra sagittigera* Hufn., *Autographa bractea* D.&S. and *Trisateles emortualis* D.&S. The latter could easily be overlooked in a full trap as it resembles a small, faded Emerald! Other moths included *Dendrolimus pini* L. and the smaller Lasiocampid *Cosmotriche lunigera* Esp. whose larvae feed on spruce.

We took full advantage of the numerous ski lifts to explore the tops of the local mountains, including the spectacular Mont Blanc. The latter, though, was thoroughly spoiled by the hoards of tourists to whom the phrase "orderly queue" meant absolutely nothing! Far more enjoyable was the small rack-and-pinion train which climbs from La Fayet to the Nid d'Aigle at 2400m. On the steep slopes overlooking the impressive Bionassay Glacier I netted, after much careful stalking, a few specimens of *Pontia callidice* Hb. and *Erebia pandrose* Bork.

Nearer home I found a colony of *Boloria aquilornis* Stichel inhabiting a small acid bog hidden by conifers on the Plateau des Glieres. Butterflies abounded on the damp flushes on the slopes overlooking the hamlet of La Douche. Here, for the benefit of the onlookers, I performed a perfect flying somersault whilst in pursuit of the beautiful *Colias phicomone* Esp. over some particularly rocky ground! A ski lift to near the top of L'Etale at La Clusaz produced *Boloria pales* D.&S. and *Albulina orbitulus* de Prun. A walk from the lift at Beauregard (also near La Clusaz) produced *Maculinea telejus* Bergs. in a small colony on damp ground at about 1500m.

Confidence in identifying *Erebia* by comparison with plates in books is not acquired with age as I once hoped! In fact, the reverse is true in my case and I have prepared slides of the genitalia for most of the species taken in Haute Savoie. The resultant list is as follows: *Erebia ligea* L., *E. euryale* Esp., *E. pharte* Hb., *E. alberganus* de Prun., *E. pluto* de Prun., *E. ? cassioides* Hohen., *E. pronoe* Esp., *E. oeme* Hb., *E. pandrose* Bork. *E. pluto* was only found, thanks to the ski lift, at the top of Mont Lachat de Chatillon (2050m). It was difficult to catch as it flew fast and low over the unstable screes. *E. alberganus* was by far the commonest species in the region. The *E. ? cassioides* from the Col de la Colombiere may well be *E. tyndarus* as both genitalia and wing markings were of little help in reaching a confident identification.

During the week following our return to Somerset I added three macro-moths to my garden list. These were *Acronicta aceris* L., *Celaena leucostigma* Hb. and *Cleorodes lichenaria* Hufn. The first rarer migrant, *Helicoverpa armigera* Hb. arrived on 30 July. A female *Orthonama obstipata* Hb. was the first of five specimens of this little migrant. I obtained eggs from this specimen. As I write (26 January 1999) the fifth generation of captive-bred larvae are hatching in a fish tank on the kitchen windowsill. Despite my telling her of the moth's rarity and beauty, Katharine still refers to them as "the vermin" because of their prolific breeding and frequent escapes into her kitchen! A second *H. armigera* on 15 August was followed by a single male *Rhodometra sacraria* L. on 20 August. Two final additions to the garden list were *Cyclophora annularia* Fab. and, at last, *Mormo maura* L.

Beetle hunting continued during the summer – I set over 80 from Haute Savoie – all of which were Carabids (and all are still awaiting identification!). In Somerset, a visit to the windswept Pawlett Hams near Bridgwater produced *Harpalus obscurus* Fab. and, at 4.8mm, the largest *Bembidion quadrimaculatum* L. to date! Open ground on the shore of Clatworthy Reservoir was home to *Chlaenius vestitutus* Payk. and *C. nigricornis* Fab. amongst others.

On 28 August we began a week-long holiday at Castle Gotha farm near St. Austell in Cornwall. A few *C. croceus* were flying over the surrounding fields. Despite cool nights, there were plenty of moths at the trap and I have never seen *Cosmorhoe ocellata* L. in such numbers. A warmer night on 2 September brought in the migrants including single specimens of *R. sacraria* and *O. obstipata,* three *Mythimna unipuncta* Haw. and two *Spodoptera exigua* Hb.

The end of the 1998 season found me, on 28 December, collecting flood refuse from the banks of the swollen River Tone. This produced far more beetles than even I could set and so, true to my earlier resolution, I set only the Carabids and preserved the rest in alcohol! This refuse added *Metabletus obscuroguttatus* Dufts., *Trechus quadristriatus* Schk., *Bembidion lunulatum* Geoff-Fourc., *B. aeneum* Germ. and *B. guttula* Fab. to the '98 list. Although the weather of the 1998 season was generally miserable my newly found freedom combined with excellent holidays to produce lasting memories to equal those of the very best seasons!– M.D. BRYAN, Extons, Taunton Road, Bishops Lydeard, Somerset TA4 3LR.